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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the positions espoused by Linda Darling-Hammond and Chester E. Finn, Jr., during a March 26, 2000, debate between the two scholars. The document contains four sections: (1) an edited transcript of the main part of the debate that contains additions from both participants for the revised May 8 edition of the paper; (2) rebuttals of the two participants; (3) a side-by-side analysis that summarizes the points of agreement and disagreement between the two participants; and (3) a discussion of what Education Commission of the States (ECS) believes are the core points of consensus between the arguments and their implications for policymakers. In her statements, Darling-Hammond reviews five major areas of recommendations: standards for both students and teachers; reinventing teacher preparation and professional development; fixing teacher recruitment; encouraging and rewarding teacher knowledge and skills; and creating schools that are organized for student and teacher success. Finn discusses the overall similarities between his and Darling-Hammond's positions, but he emphasizes the fundamental difference between the two, namely, what constitutes a good teacher. The paper closes with some of the debate's implications for policymakers, such as ensuring that teachers have command of their subject matter and providing salary incentives for teachers who accept challenging teaching assignments. (RJM)

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ECS

ED 445 396

Two Paths to Quality Teaching:

Implications for Policymakers

AN ECS STAFF COMPARISON OF THE POSITIONS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TEACHING AND AMERICA'S FUTURE AND THE THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION

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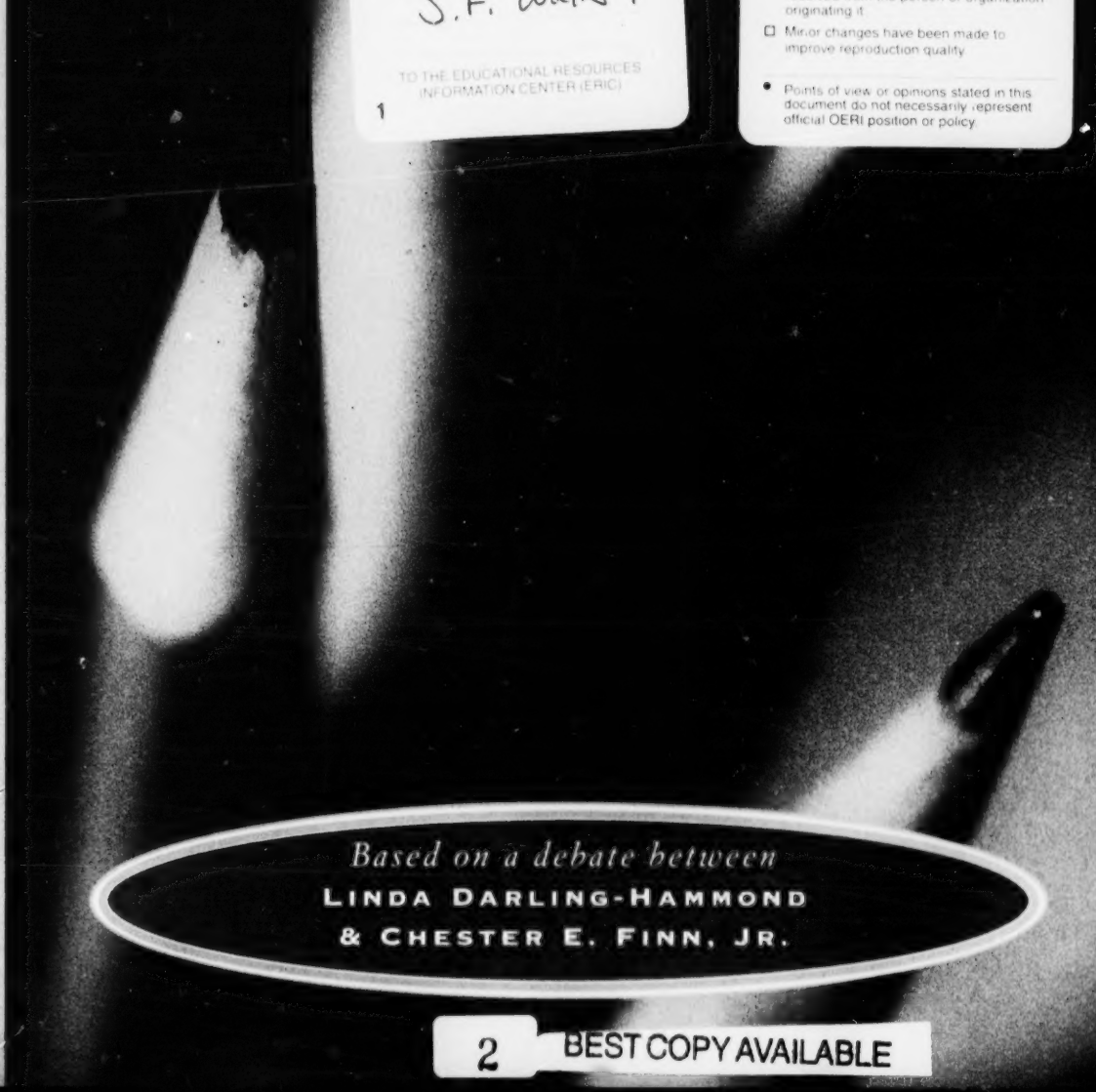

Based on a debate between
LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND
& CHESTER E. FINN, JR.

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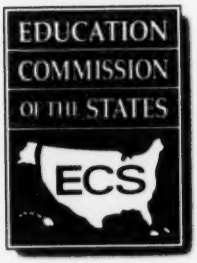
Two Paths to Quality Teaching: Implications for Policymakers

An ECS Staff Comparison of the Positions of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future
and the
Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

Based on the Debate Between
Linda Darling-Hammond
and
Chester E. Finn Jr.

Spring Steering Committee Meeting
of the
Education Commission of the States
Cheyenne, Wyoming
March 26, 2000

June 2000



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INTRODUCTION

Quality teaching is the most important ingredient in the education of our children. But for too many, it remains an elusive dream. What path should we follow to make quality teaching a reality for all children?

On March 26, 2000, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) hosted a historic debate on quality teaching between Linda Darling-Hammond, executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), and Chester E. Finn Jr., president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. These two leading experts long have been recognized for their vocal advocacy of strongly opposed positions on the improvement of education in general and of the quality of teaching in particular. These positions have been interpreted as implying very different strategies for what America must do to produce the teachers it needs.

What struck many of the more than 100 state policymakers and educators who gathered for the debate at the ECS Spring Steering Committee Meeting in Cheyenne, Wyoming, however, was not the expected opposition between the two positions but the significant and sometimes unanticipated areas of apparent agreement. Heartened by this agreement, several people suggested that ECS prepare a document that focuses on the consensus between the two approaches and indicates to policymakers what the implications are for developing strategies to improve the quality of teaching in their states.

This paper follows up on that suggestion. It contains three sections: (1) an edited transcript of the main part of the debate between Darling-Hammond and Finn that contains additions from both participants for the revised May 8 edition of the paper; (2) a side-by-side analysis, prepared by ECS staff, that summarizes the points of agreement and disagreement between NCTAF's and Fordham's views on quality teaching; and (3) a discussion of what ECS believes are the core points of consensus between the Fordham and NCTAF positions and their implications for policymakers.

A word of caution is in order. While those of us who work so hard toward the improvement of American public education, and of the quality of teaching in particular, are eager to find confident strategies that work, and are thus excited by an apparent consensus among such seemingly divergent points of view as NCTAF and Fordham, we must not ignore several important considerations. First, although the consensus often is indeed heartening, at times it is superficial and breaks down when specific strategies are considered in more depth. The points of agreement between Fordham and NCTAF that are emphasized here are lifted out of the larger, more systemic context of their two positions that differ on many points. Second, even when the consensus between NCTAF and Fordham is more significant, it remains simply a point of agreement and not an infallible truth. In far too many areas related to improving teaching quality, ECS believes that incontrovertible research evidence — including the evaluation of various programs and policy strategies — is lacking. Nevertheless, we must proceed in the absence of such evidence because the task of improving education — and teaching — for our children is too urgent to wait.

We at ECS hope that the present document gives some confidence and helpful direction to state policymakers in their efforts to improve the quality of teaching in their states. We believe policymakers should give the points of consensus that are discussed in the final section serious consideration for action.

In addition to this document, the ECS Web site presents a video-streamed presentation of the full debate between Darling-Hammond and Finn. The debate may be viewed at www.ecs.org under the "Which Path to Quality Teaching?" section, accessible from the home page. That section also includes thematic clips from the debate, a number of useful resources and an ongoing discussion on quality teaching in which we invite you to participate.

We also hope that policymakers will take advantage of the staff and the many other resources we have at ECS to assist you in your efforts. Through a generous grant from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, ECS has begun co-hosting workshops on quality teaching in a number of states and will continue to do so over the next two years. As always, ECS is happy to provide information in response to specific inquiries or

technical assistance on behalf of various efforts in which policymakers are engaged. Our phone number is 303-299-3600.

Finally, we at ECS wish to reiterate our gratitude to Linda and Checker for their willingness to take part in the original debate and to make the transcript available for wider dissemination. This revised version of the original document has benefited from additions and changes suggested by Linda, Checker and their colleagues. Apart from the debate itself, the opinions and suggestions expressed in this document — including the attribution of agreement between the NCTAF and Fordham positions and the side-by-side comparison — are those of ECS staff and do not necessarily represent the views of Linda, Checker, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future or the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Ted Sanders
President
Education Commission of the States
June 2000

THE DEBATE

Note: The following edited transcript is based closely on the original Cheyenne debate between Linda Darling-Hammond and Chester E. Finn Jr., but it has been re-edited with clarifications from the two speakers. Also, Darling-Hammond used a number of slides in conjunction with her presentation that are referenced in the text. That slide presentation may be viewed on the ECS Web site, www.ecs.org, in the "Which Path to Quality Teaching?" section.

Linda Darling-Hammond

I'm going to talk about the work of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and mention a variety of the kind of research the commission has done. My perspective is also informed by the fact that I have taught and been a teachers' aide at the elementary, junior high and high school levels, and I am currently engaged in educating teachers. I went to Stanford [as Ducommun Professor of Education] with the idea of redesigning the teacher education program and, in fact, I'm going to be scooting out of here later to get back to teach the student teaching practicum tomorrow. So my perspectives on these issues are informed by a lot of the work I do day to day with dozens and dozens of teachers and people in schools, as well as the research that we see more broadly.

The National Commission is a 26-member privately organized commission funded by the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations. Its members are governors, legislators, businesspeople, education leaders and so on, who took upon themselves the task of trying to figure out what we would need to do as a nation to enable all kids to reach the kind of high standards that states are increasingly setting for them and that the labor market and the economy increasingly demand.

There are five major areas of recommendations that resulted from two years of intensive study and debate and wrestling of all kinds. They were ultimately unanimously endorsed, but it was not an easy process getting there. These are the five categories:

1. **Getting serious about standards for both students and teachers.** If we are going to hold students to standards, then we need to be able to ensure that the teachers who work with them also will be able to teach to those standards.

2. **Reinventing teacher preparation and professional development.** Both of these have operated with many difficulties over the years in many places. I won't go into great detail, but the issues are mostly about connecting clinical work in schools with knowledge about what works for teaching and subject-matter knowledge. Another issue is having professional development that is sustained, content-rich and curriculum-embedded instead of what we call the sort of "drive-by workshop" or "spray-and-pray" approach to professional development.

3. **Fixing teacher recruitment.** There are many problems in the teacher supply and demand system in this country, and it is difficult to put qualified teachers in every classroom. We gave examples for each of these recommendations of places that are doing these things well and have solved problems that many other districts or states experience. We also provided data about the outcomes of those policy efforts.

4. **Encouraging and rewarding teacher knowledge and skills.** There need to be reasons for good teachers to stay in the classroom and to continue to get smart about what they do.

5. **Creating schools that are organized for student and teacher success.** It won't be good enough if we have very well-prepared teachers who go into schools that are dysfunctional, badly organized and don't enable them to use what they know.

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The National Commission report talked about strategies which rely on various kinds of levers in the policy system, such as standards boards and accreditation of teacher education programs. We called for:

- Closing inadequate schools of education
- Using demonstrated performance as the basis of licensing teachers
- Using the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as a benchmark for accomplished teaching and as an engine to pull the knowledge base of the profession along
- Organizing teacher education and professional development around standards for students as well as for teaching
- Developing a year-long internship in a professional development school as part of teacher education
- Creating high-quality alternative routes into teaching for mid-career folks and others who want to enter teaching through means other than the four-year undergraduate teacher education program
- Funding mentoring programs for beginners so that they would not leave the profession at such high rates and would become more competent
- Creating stable sources of professional development so that teachers can count on it from year to year
- Equalizing access to quality teachers by helping low-wealth districts afford quality teachers
- Fixing dysfunctional personnel systems. (We gave many examples of large districts that had gone from having four- to six-month lag times in being able to interview a candidate to being much more efficient in being able to evaluate qualifications and get people hired. This turns out to be one of the most important things to do to address what seem to be shortages in some districts.)
- Eliminating barriers to teacher mobility and providing incentives for working in the areas where we most need high-quality teachers
- Developing a career continuum that links compensation with knowledge and skills
- Strategies for removing incompetent teachers, which we documented several districts having developed effectively
- Pursuing board certification for 105,000 teachers (that's the number of schools in the country by 2006).

Only 43% of education staff in the United States are classroom teachers, compared to 80% in Japan and at least 60% in most other Asian and European countries.

In terms of school organizations, one of the things we discovered is that the United States spends much less of its resources on teaching in the classroom than many other industrialized countries. Only 43% of education staff in the United States are classroom teachers, compared to 80% in Japan and at least 60% in most other Asian and European countries. We found there is a need for:

- Allocating resources to where they matter most — not to special projects at the edge of the system, but to supporting high-quality teachers with technology in the classroom
- Venture capital for teacher learning tied to school improvement
- Ways to reward efforts to improve
- Principals who really know a lot about teaching and learning and how to lead high-performing schools.

There are now 15 state partners of the National Commission and four more that are applying for partnership status over the course of this coming year. Each state within the commission works on doing their own needs assessment of what's going on with teaching in their state. We then give them support to understand what kinds of programs might address needs that they feel are important for their own personal efforts. We have nine urban district partners as well that are working on teacher recruitment and development throughout the continuum. We use a policy inventory with all of those partners so they develop a "condition-of-teaching" report for their own state or district. And then we continue to document working models and research on effective policies and practices.

We could characterize the commission's major approach to strategies for solution as aiming at professional accountability — trying to figure out how to hold the system and teachers accountable for getting and using knowledge about what works in a variety of ways, from recruitment through preparation through licensing through professional development. Fordham's approach is a market accountability approach, trying to let the market do the job, letting most people get access to teaching, but then firing teachers or closing schools that do poorly.

The commission has a variety of strategies, using these mechanisms that I described, that aim to ensure access to both subject-matter and teaching knowledge and to ensure that teachers meet standards both before and

after hiring. The Fordham approach relies on subject-matter knowledge only, and only when it's convenient to do so because it doesn't have a strategy for dealing with the big misassignment problems that occur across the country. The Fordham approach also relies on people's good instincts about teaching and looks for evidence of quality based on student test-score gains after hiring.

My concerns about that approach are for a child in the classroom in 2nd grade who is taught by somebody for whom we don't have good evidence about their ability to teach reading and other key subjects. The fact that that teacher might get evaluated a year or more later, and then found either adequate or wanting, doesn't help the classroom of kids who have been the guinea pigs for the approach of letting people in and then figuring out later if they know how to teach.

One of the things we found out in the commission's work is that many districts don't hire the best-qualified applicants for teaching positions, even when they are available. There are lots of reasons for this. We found really dysfunctional hiring practices in a lot of places which have what look like shortages even when there is a labor market surplus in the surrounding area. Sometimes it takes months and months for people to get access to an interview. We found unequal pay and working conditions make a difference across states. Some districts have no shortages; others have surpluses because there is such a large differential in pay and working conditions. There are sometimes preferences for low-paid personnel — many districts won't hire a well-qualified person with higher degrees and experience if they cost more than a beginner without training. There are cumbersome screening processes, hiring decisions that are sometimes delayed until after the school year starts and so on.

There is [in the Fordham position] the idea of just leaving it up to school districts and principals to figure out who the best-qualified candidates are. But this is an enormous gamble in a context where in large cities you may have many qualified applicants who never get hired. In New York City, there were nearly 35,000 applicants for the 4,000 teaching positions that were available at the time we looked at the system. About 28,000 of them were qualified, yet half the people hired were unqualified because they were hired after Labor Day for the most part, when qualified people had moved on to other places. And they didn't have a process that could screen easily and recruit quickly for high quality.

The other issue is that poor and minority children get the least-qualified teachers in virtually every context across states and across districts. You can see that in California, which I'll come back to later as an example of where the Fordham Foundation experiment is already being enacted. High-minority schools are nine or 10 times more likely to have unqualified teachers than low-minority schools. High-poverty schools are several times more likely to have unqualified teachers. So when the market operates, it does not always operate to provide all children with the best-qualified teachers.

[P]oor and minority children get the least-qualified teachers in virtually every context across states and across districts.

What is the evidence? There has been a lot of debate about the evidence. I won't go into all the details because we have limited time now, but I'll return to this if people have questions about it. There is a debate between myself and Michael Podgursky and Dale Ballou that's published in the Teachers College Record in February [2000] that you may want to look at as one part of the debate about the quality and nature of the evidence.

At the commission, we reviewed many individual pieces of research as well as research reviews since 1970. Each of these reviews looked at a couple of dozen studies to, in some cases, 60 or 70 studies. They consistently concluded that fully prepared and certified teachers are better rated generally, and more successful with students, than teachers who lack either subject-matter or teaching knowledge. In fact, there is pretty consistent evidence, as you might think, that subject-matter knowledge does matter. It matters up to a certain point, beyond which it seems not to add additional value; there is some threshold effect. But, interestingly, across these ranges of studies, there actually turn out to be significant gains in student achievement and teacher ratings when teachers have access to knowledge about teaching and learning — more often and with larger effect sizes even than knowledge of subject matter.

So both are clearly important, as teachers often find when they get to the classroom, thinking that they can

simply illuminate children with their subject-matter knowledge and not realizing how many learning issues they have to be able to confront to do that effectively. These studies have also found that teachers admitted [to the profession] with less than full preparation are not only less satisfied with their training, but they also have greater difficulties planning; they have a hard time predicting what kids are likely to know or have trouble with; and they have more trouble managing the classroom, diagnosing student-learning needs and adapting their instruction. As a consequence, you find that there is a big difference in the outcomes that they get. And teachers admitted with less than full certification leave teaching at much higher rates much sooner than teachers who are fully prepared, often saying they felt they couldn't do the job that they hoped to be able to do.

Certification is one of the places on which we [i.e., the National Commission and the Fordham Foundation] have substantial disagreement.

Across the board, there are a lot of characteristics that have turned out to be important for teacher performance, everything from verbal ability and subject-matter knowledge, about which I think Checker [Finn] and I probably agree (although I never take that for granted, and he'll let me know if I'm correct about that). But in addition, what counts are pedagogical knowledge, certification status and experience up to a certain point. However, teachers who are in collegial schools continue to get more effective with experience, while those who are in isolated schools drop off in effectiveness after a while.

There is also the fact that teachers who are good are flexible; they're adaptable, they can adjust what they do to the needs of different students. That's sort of a trait of temperament, but it is also one that can be developed through professional development — helping people get a wider repertoire that lets them be more flexible at what they do.

Certification is one of the places on which we [i.e., the National Commission and the Fordham Foundation] have substantial disagreement. As one example of the many studies we reviewed, a study which matched teachers by years of experience and schools, and controlled for the early initial achievement of students, found that teachers certified in mathematics had achievement gains substantially better — not only in general math, but even more so in a subject like algebra — than teachers who are not certified in mathematics and who lacked either the subject-matter or the teaching knowledge that certification seeks to assure. [See Hawk, Coble and Swanson (1985, May-June). "Certification: It Does Matter," *Journal of Teacher Education*, 36 (3)]

There have been a set of studies over recent years that have looked at the effects of certification on student performance. In North Carolina, they found that a 1% increase in teacher quality as measured by scores on the NTE [National Teachers Exam] exam in both professional knowledge and subject- matter knowledge led to a 3-5% decrease in the fail rates on the North Carolina tests for students. In Dallas, a study of alternatively certified teachers vs. traditionally certified teachers found that there were much higher learning gains in language arts and writing for the students of traditionally prepared teachers. Interestingly, these two groups of teachers had exactly equivalent average scores on the subject-matter tests that Texas offers. Another national study and a study in Los Angeles County find similar effects of teacher training and certification on student achievement. So the evidence base that preparing teachers makes sense is continuing to accrue. What we find is that regardless of the income level of the school or the students, the proportion of certified teachers makes a difference in how students achieve.

The other thing that has been very interesting to discover is that teachers who are better prepared, particularly those who have gone through the kind of extended teacher preparation programs the National Commission recommended, enter and stay at very high rates. Many states have encouraged five-year models of teacher education [which typically award a bachelors in a discipline and a masters in education] with a year-long student teaching experience, often in a professional development school (PDS). A PDS is similar to a teaching hospital experience, which better integrates clinical work with the rest of the teacher education curriculum. In comparative studies, of 100 who enter such a five-year program, at least 90 go into teaching, and 84 are still there three years later. Compare that to a four-year undergraduate program where 70% of those who started the program enter

teaching and 53% of those who entered the program are still teaching a few years later.

When you look at alternative certification programs of the sort that feature a short summer program and then candidates become full-time teachers in the fall, only 34% are still in teaching three years later. After calculating the costs of preparation, recruitment, induction, and replacement due to attrition, it actually turns out to be less expensive to train people well in a five-year teacher education program than it is to have a revolving door of folks who come in and out of the profession having not only not enough training to be effective but also not enough to encourage them to stay.

The commission did a study examining the influence on student achievement across states using NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] scores. This study was provoked by Dale Ballou and Michael Podgursky, who had done a kind of a crazy study in which they tried to establish a correlation between state student achievement scores and some indicators of state policies and teaching force characteristics that NCTAF published in its first report. In the process, they actually tried to show a correlation between student scores and some policies that had been enacted after the student achievement data was collected. I know policymakers are effective in many ways, but rarely are you able to retroactively affect achievement with a policy. Ballou and Podgursky came up with a small but positive correlation and concluded, "Well, this is not a very powerful agenda."

In response, we just took the variables that actually had to do with the qualifications of teachers that we had used in the index, and did a regression analysis of state student achievement scores, holding poverty and language minority status of students constant. We actually predicted upwards of 70-80% of the variance in states' scores, which is a very high rate of prediction, primarily based on the variables describing teacher qualifications. The proportion of teachers with full certification and a major in their field predicted between 40% and 60% of all of the variance in student achievement. This proportion was much more predictive than per-pupil spending as a whole or class size. The proportion of uncertified teachers was a strong negative predictor; the proportion of teachers with less than a minor in the field was also a negative predictor.

I'm not going to go into this because we want to end this part of the discussion, but we looked at states like Connecticut, which has had a huge trajectory in reading gains, and found that their 14-year policy strategy of investing in teaching was highly related to their student achievement gains, as was the case in several other states that had pursued similar reforms. Thank you.

Chester Finn Jr.

Thank you, Linda. Thank you National Commission (NCTAF) for raising national consciousness about this dual set of very serious problems — a teacher quality problem and at the same time a rising teacher quantity problem — and the perplexing challenges of solving both of them at once.

If you would like to see a full text of what we at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and a number of our colleagues have suggested, you may want to go to our Web site: www.edexcellence.net. Start by reading the manifesto called *The Teachers We Need and How To Get More of Them.* It came out about 18 months ago, signed initially by 50-some people, including governors, chief state school officers and a number of prominent educators. In it, we suggest that, just possibly, a better way to a greater number of better teachers is not to raise the entry hoops and hurdles and standardize and homogenize and tighten up, but, rather, to open the doors and welcome lots more people into American public schools through lots more pathways. Devolve most of the personnel decisions to the individual schools to hire, compensate and deploy people who they think are good at what they do and who they see are good at what they do. And, then hold

individual schools accountable for their results. Don't put all the emphasis on the inputs. Put most of the emphasis on the results. Free up the public schools, as in fact has happened to private schools and charter schools in most of the country, to make the personnel decisions to hire the people they think would do the best job.

Now this is a different philosophical orientation, and I come to you today not with the absolute certainty that it's going to work everywhere, but with a sense of humility regarding it and the National Commission's recommendations and a lot of other advice that is out there in the field, such as Lowell Milken's recommendation for restructuring the teaching profession. I think what this subject needs today, and some of you may think this uncharacteristic of me, is humility, open-mindedness, pluralism and experimentalism.

I also come with a plea for states to approach teacher-quality enhancement in that spirit. This is not an undertaking that is ripe for dogmatism, certainty, monopoly or "one-size-fits-all" policies. I think Linda and I do agree about the nature of the problem facing the country. Where we probably begin to diverge is over the definition of what is a good teacher. I think this resembles the debate that America's been having about what's a good school.

[T]he real test of a good school isn't what goes into it, but what comes out.

We once supposed, and some people indeed still suppose, that a good school is one with the right sorts of resources, services and activities — where classes are small, books are plentiful, computers can be found all over the place, the roof doesn't leak, the principal is a dynamo, the halls are clean, and there are scads of special programs for children with every sort of need. Sounds great, but it may or may not turn out to be a good school. Because, in my view, and I suspect most of your views, the real test of a good school isn't what goes into it, but what comes out. How much and how well are the students actually learning? That's the real test of a school and the real definition.

I think the only meaningful definition of a good school is one in which lots of learning occurs, where kids are gaining skills and knowledge. I've seen mighty scruffy schools that lack a lot of conventional inputs and services, but where a lot of learning is occurring. And I've seen schools that look like the Taj Mahal, where there are a zillion adults and a million special programs, and where very little learning is occurring. The point is that we have known, more or less, since the Coleman Report of 1966 that there is no clear, direct relationship between what goes into the school and what comes out the other end. And we have increasingly begun in this country to say what matters to schools is what comes out the other end.

We have increasingly begun to follow the organizational model that much of the business world has already adopted, which is to obsess about the results and lighten up about the processes, about the methods, about the inputs. Some people call this the "tight-loose" approach to organizational management. Be really tight about standards, goals, outcomes and accountability, but be really loose about the means by which these things are produced. That is why so many corporations have thrown out their elaborate manuals of procedures. And it is why a lot of states have been devolving all kinds of decisionmaking to individual schools and experimenting with things like charter schools and so forth.

My colleagues and I have much the same view of teachers. A good teacher is quite simply one whose students acquire the requisite skills and knowledge, one who adds sufficient academic value to her pupils. She may do lots of other worthwhile things as well, but if she doesn't add academic value, then she is not a good teacher, and if she does add academic value, then she is a good teacher. That is the only definition of being a good teacher that truly matters in the real world. If she is a good teacher, I don't much care where she came from or how she got to be that way, and I don't think policymakers should obsess about this either.

To the contrary, we should welcome good teachers of every size and shape and should welcome them no matter what path they follow to the schoolhouse door. We shouldn't just welcome them. We should recruit them. We should reward them. We should treat them well. What we should not do is go crazy about their inputs, their formal credentials, the number of courses and degrees on their transcripts, or whether they went through one kind of preparation program or another, or whether the preparation program was accredited by

this outfit or that outfit or not accredited at all. Just as we're learning with schools to be laid back about what they do and how they do it so long as they produce acceptable results, we are well-advised to take a view of teachers and others who work in schools that says we're laid back as long as you produce the results. These things intersect.

Last week, I was at a session where the founder of one of the more interesting new D.C. charter schools, the Maya Angelou Charter School (which mainly serves dropouts and adjudicated youth, all of them minority), was asked by someone in the audience which regulation was he most grateful for not having to follow. He instantly said, "Teacher certification," observing that the freedom to hire great people from diverse backgrounds and deploy them creatively was the single greatest source of his school's ability to meet its students' educational needs. That was by far the regulation that he was most happy to not have to follow in this promising new school.

Yes, charter schools may still be a special case. But this guy illustrates something that I believe might well become the general case. Namely, the freedom of individual schools and their principals and their teaching teams to hire, deploy, compensate and retain those teachers they find are most effective in getting the job done. That probably sums up the essence of our manifesto. It's such an important sentence, or sentence fragment, that I am going to repeat it. The freedom of individual schools and principals to hire, deploy, compensate and retain those teachers who they find are most effective in getting the job done. It's not a formula, mind you. This is a plea for freedom, devolution, pluralism and diversity, all centered on the concept of school accountability.

It is different from the National Commission's approach, which relies on various forms of standardization, regulation and control. It's not just that we think this is the right way to run schools, educate kids and widen the pool of great teachers. It's also that identifying great teachers in advance of putting them on the job turns out to be a surprisingly difficult thing to do. There are tons of research. You could fill the Grand Canyon with the research on teachers, teacher qualities, teacher effectiveness. And yet, after you go through all of it (or most of it, or as much as you can stomach), it turns out that it's largely unknowable who will be an effective teacher.

It is especially unknowable if you look at inputs — at what kind of training this person had, what kind of test they passed, what kind of program they spent how long in or by whom it was accredited. The sources of teacher effectiveness are pretty murky. Classroom success seems to have quite a lot to do with art and craft as well as with science. It's related to temperament and personality, to character and attitude, as well as to formal training. There have been mounds of research. Much of it's actually not very good research. Very little of it is longitudinal research. Almost none of it is random or experimental research. In some cases, a statistical relationship is identified (a correlation), but other important variables are generally not controlled for. Where you discover that there is a high correlation between, let's say teachers with master's degrees and students who are achieving a lot — well, which came first, the chicken or the egg? Did the master's degrees cause the learning? Or do people with master's degrees tend to congregate in schools where kids do a lot of learning? You cannot know that from a simple correlation.

The freedom of individual schools and principals to hire, deploy, compensate and retain those teachers who they find are most effective in getting the job done . . . . This is a plea for freedom, devolution, pluralism and diversity, all centered on the concept of school accountability.

That is exactly why I think we should be approaching this field, not with dogmatism, not with uniformity, but with an air of experimentalism. I'm pleased that 15 states are trying the National Commission's approach. I think another 15 states should try approach B, and 15 states should try approach C. Then I guess there'd be five left over. They should try five different things. ECS [the Education Commission of the States] should mediate and moderate and figure and evaluate and study the bejesus out of these different approaches in order that we learn more about what works how well over time. We should be as experimental about this as we possibly can be.

My own observation, from much of the research, is if you want to enhance your odds of hiring an effective teacher, you'll look for someone who is basically smart and knows a lot about the subject that she'll be teaching. Linda has suggested that the Fordham

approach relies on subject-matter knowledge when it's convenient because we don't have a strategy for dealing with misassignment of teachers. Wrong. It's not convenience that drives our support for subject mastery but, rather, our discovery that such research as is available today points very strongly to the harmfulness of out-of-field teaching. Students of teachers who have specialized in their subjects simply perform better academically than students of out-of-field teachers. Nor should one need much fancy research to reach that pretty obvious conclusion. If a teacher knows a subject well, there is a greater likelihood that she will be able to impart knowledge of that subject to her students. (There is not the same base of research to support mandatory training in pedagogy.)

Let us not confer monopolies on any one approach or any one organization or pathway into the classroom.

The approach I have been suggesting sounds commonsensical, even obvious, but it's amazingly difficult to put that into practice. This system really is deeply mired in regulation of inputs and processes. I'd like, however, to emphasize once again that the approach I have been suggesting is based on research and observation but that it does not follow an ironclad rule or suggest a failsafe formula. Humility, remember? All I said was that this is a way to enhance your odds, not a foolproof recipe. Some people who are smart and knowledgeable don't make good teachers. Or, they might make good teachers of some subjects, or some grade levels, or some kind of kids, but not others. Conversely, some very good teachers are not the sharpest knives in the drawer, nor are they always the most deeply grounded in subject-matter knowledge, but they're effective anyway because of how they motivate kids and the uses they're able to make of learning experiences and resources of many kinds.

In truth, the entire field remains something of a "black box" as to the attributes of a good teacher and the sources of those attributes. I don't think anybody yet has a foolproof formula for producing more of them. Not the National Commission, not Lowell Milken, not us. That's why we should approach this enterprise with an attitude of skepticism toward dogma, faux certainty and excessive claims about what research shows. With wariness toward anyone who says they're sure of what the answer is. With an attitude of "show me" toward those who would restrict entry according to some formula. And with a welcoming attitude toward good teachers wherever we can find them.

We should be trying a lot of different things. Let us not confer monopolies on any one approach or any one organization or pathway into the classroom. Anything that chokes off creativity, diversity and experimentalism at this stage is apt to be a mistake. Let's therefore not try to make all teachers jump the same hurdles and go through all the same training programs across the country. If a state wants to standardize, homogenize, regulate, raise the hoops, raise the hurdles, fine, let a state try that. And let ECS find out whether it works.

The National Commission suggests that the core of the answer is "certification" of teachers. In its playbook, if a teacher is certified — at least according to a certification process that follows the commission's formula — then she is qualified. Well, as we read the evidence, this is an audacious overstatement and maybe even an untruth. There are plenty of teachers who are "certified," yet have abysmal track records when it comes to boosting student learning. These teachers are not "qualified" even if they are "certified."

But don't be surprised that certification does not guarantee qualified teachers. Education programs routinely draw from the low end of the achievement spectrum and the coursework they supply in pedagogy is less than rigorous. If we are unsure about how adequately an education program prepares a teacher, we can look at teachers' scores on subject-specific licensing exams taken after they complete their preparation programs. For example, Massachusetts adopted a rigorous subject-matter test and, as is well known by now, over half of the prospective teaching candidates failed. Other states that rely on more conventional licensure testing, such as the NTE or Praxis exams, which, by the way, the Education Trust analyzed and found to be pitched at very low levels of intellectual challenge and substantive content, have set cut scores so low as to make passing these tests all but meaningless. Because the cut scores are so low, looking at pass rates is not enough. But if we look at the percent correct on these exams, it's clear that teachers who are "certified" — and in the National Commission's estimation "qualified" — do not necessarily know their subjects well. For example, in Kentucky a teacher is certified in English if she gets 50% of the material on the Praxis II

test correct. In New Jersey, if a teacher answers 50% of the mathematics content questions correct, she is deemed a "qualified" teacher and is certified.

Frustration with the lamentable quality of many education schools has prompted the federal government to demand that teacher preparation programs henceforth reveal their graduates' scores on licensure exams and their job placement rates. States, frustrated with the poor quality of teachers who are "certified," have also begun to require that their education schools "guarantee" their products. For example, under recent Georgia legislation, teachers whose students are failing will be sent back to their education schools to be retrained.

Central to the problem of education schools is the gap between their values and those of the public (and of many teachers). Parents, politicians, citizens and business leaders want teachers who, above all, can advance student learning. Yet education schools resist this notion, instead favoring teachers imbued with trendy pedagogical methods. Linda has mentioned that the National Commission, working closely with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, has established a stable body of knowledge that will produce good teachers. In fact, however, the standards these organizations have produced are nebulous and have never been reliably linked to student achievement.

While Linda has attempted to characterize the Fordham approach as "reckless" because we suggest placing teachers who have not been through one of these education programs in front of children, my colleagues and I respond that our approach is less risky than the status quo. Our method would at least ensure subject-matter knowledge (and background checks). The present approach merely ensures having completed an education school-based certification sequence that may, or may not, include subject knowledge and may, or may not, include proven methods of instructing children.

Think, once again, about the dynamics and incentives that our approach will build into schools. If schools are being held to tough standards for pupil achievement and someone is doing a good job of tracking students' academic gains year by year, two things happen. Principals, once given freedom over personnel, have a great incentive to look for a smart, knowledgeable teacher — wherever they can find one — and at the end of the year, we examine the students' performance under this teacher's tutelage. If the pupils show gains in achievement, this teacher will presumably be retained, should be rewarded, and may become a mentor for other teachers. If student performance is flat, however, then efforts are directed to mentoring this teacher and if nothing changes, she's removed from the classroom. This plan hardly sounds reckless. I'd say it sounds careful. Whose students are apt to be better served, year after year?

What sounds reckless to me is placing all our confidence in a teacher just because she's certified and then never looking back.

Our emphasis is not on inputs, regulations, hours of coursework in education programs, but rather on how much learning teachers impart to their students.

Let me be clear about a related and slightly contrary point. I don't think that great teachers just drop out of the sky in serendipitous but random fashion. Policymakers should try to create environments in which we get more rather than fewer of them. But that does not mean focusing primarily on where they come from. We should focus primarily on whether they're good at what they do, and on placing the key personnel decisions in the hands of those who are best able to judge whether an individual teacher is effective at imparting the necessary skills and knowledge to children.

I've alluded several times to the weakness of education schools. Let me take a moment to suggest how they should fit into our proposals for improving teacher quality. You will hear it said (Linda sometimes says this, though I don't think she said it today) that schools of education should be more like schools of medicine and that teaching as a profession should be more like medicine as a profession. There is an important reason, however, why they are very different and likely to stay that way for some time to come. For better and worse, medicine rests on science, on a reasonably stable body of knowledge, based on high-quality, replicable research accepted by almost everyone in the field and systematically imparted by its training institutions.

I look forward to the day when teaching will be like that, too. But it isn't that way today, and it may not be for the next two centuries. There are lots of big gaps in the knowledge base of teaching, and the curricula of many training programs turn out to have at least as much to do with the ideologies and enthusiasms of the faculty as with anything one might term science. If you want a single example, take the one area of teaching that is perhaps closest to having a solid scientific basis, namely primary reading, and see how few of our teacher-training programs conscientiously rest their preparation of primary school teachers on that knowledge base. We know it works. Yet it's rarely imparted in a systematic way to primary teachers, even when we know what works. Indeed, the National Reading Panel recently reported finding no evidence that teacher-training programs are teaching the research-based methods they recommend or that the training programs that exist are having a positive impact on student literacy.

[T]he country should be thinking about teachers in essentially the same way we're beginning to think about schools. Let's do whatever works.

And then, there are all those areas of teaching where the scientific base is really flimsy. Effectiveness in middle school social studies teaching, for example. Very little is known about what makes for greater or lesser success in that area. In many parts of teaching, unfortunately, at this moment we are closer, I think, to leeches and phrenology than to electron microscopy and neurosurgery. This is a pity, but I think it is the case.

A better comparison than medical school might actually be journalism school. Some people are great journalists without ever having gone to journalism school. Some journalists, on the other hand, say they learned a lot at journalism school, and it's made them what they are. Let formal teacher education be optional for teachers as journalism education is for journalists. If a preparation program is good, plenty of people will want to participate in it. It will have a reputation for imparting very valuable skills and knowledge to people who pass through it. But it should be optional. Attending a journalism school is not a prerequisite for getting a job with a newspaper or TV station. I have the same view of colleges of education. If they are good, and they are optional, people will go to them. If they are not good, and they are optional, people won't go to them. If good teachers emerge through other pathways, hire them, even if they didn't go to a college of education.

Let me close by repeating the essential point, which is that the country should be thinking about teachers in essentially the same way we're beginning to think about schools. Let's do whatever works. Let's lighten up on the inputs and regulations and procedures, while getting ever more persnickety about results. Set standards, sure, and have accountability mechanisms in place. But link both standards and accountability for teachers to the desired outcomes — namely, actual evidence that actual pupils are actually learning what they actually need to know from the actual teachers in their actual classrooms. That should be our credo. But we don't need a policy formula. We should try a lot of different things and find out which approaches are most likely to produce these results most often. Thank you.

REBUTTALS

Linda Darling-Hammond

I agree that we should focus on results. One result of the study that I'm pleased that Dale Ballou and Michael Podgursky provoked us to do is that the outcomes of differing policies across states is clear. Associated with this very, very wide range of student outcomes across our states in the United States, there are also widely differing state standards for entering and staying in teaching and for enforcing those standards. One of the things we discovered is that this high correlation between the quality of teaching and teachers was accompanied by huge variability in the extent to which students achieve. So if you want to see the natural experiment, you can take a look at it. It already exists.

We also, as I mentioned earlier, basically predicted (depending on the grade level and whether it was math or reading) between 70% and over 80% of the total variance in state achievement. Here [pointing to slide] is the Fordham Foundation ranking of the states on teacher quality next to the states' student achievement trends, which here we happen to have for mathematics. We could show the same thing in reading. If you read this, one of the things that you'll notice is that the top-ranking states on the Fordham indicators received Cs, Ds and Fs in student achievement. Connecticut, which has left the rest of the country in its dust on reading achievement, gets a C or C-, I believe, from Fordham. Some of the other top-ranked and high-achieving states get Ds and Fs. And some states that are down near the bottom, like California, which is a flat line and had declined before it evened out a little, gets a B from Fordham.

So what are the bases on which the Fordham indicators are developed? They are developed on the extent to which the states have open access to teaching — that is, loopholes in the extent to which standards for teaching are enforced and the extent to which they have an active program for pursuing vouchers and charters. By the way, we do agree, I think, on the value of public school choice and charters and redesign of schools and creativity there. But it's not necessarily a predictor at this moment of how well students will do since we have wide variability on the kind of accountability system employed.

On the final slide, you'll see we already have the Fordham experiment in operation in California, where there is essentially a totally market approach to teacher education and hiring. There are no real operative standards for accrediting schools of education programs that are high and rigorous. There are more than 30,000 uncredentialed teachers, 3,000 alternatively certified teachers, and 10 times more under-prepared teachers in high-poverty schools. Attrition rates are 70% for uncertified teachers, most of whom are gone within three years. That matches national statistics. Among district interns (which is an alternative route strategy), more than 50% are gone within three years. And there have been a slew of studies in the last year-and-a-half showing significantly lower achievement in reading and mathematics for the students who are taught by under-qualified teachers, whether you look at it before you control for poverty or after.

In the long run, it's about guaranteeing that when a kid is sent to school by his or her parents, the person who is there to greet them has already demonstrated that she or he understands what she is trying to teach and has the tools available to teach it effectively.

In the long run, why would you care about guarantees of preparation? You'd care because you need safeguards for students. This is not about the access of adults to the labor market or the ability of interested or disinterested parties to play around with experiments that may or may not prove to enable kids to learn. In the long run, it's about guaranteeing that when a kid is sent to school by his or her parents, the person who is there to greet them has already demonstrated that she or he understands what she is trying to teach and has the tools available to teach it effectively.

Chester Finn Jr.

Linda is an honorable combatant and the only cheap shot she's tried today was the California information. It's completely misleading. All of those things she decried in California did not follow from the state's effort to install a new approach to teacher preparation and deployment but, rather, from that state's headlong pursuit into smaller classes, which generated an urgent need to hire tens of thousands more teachers than they ever had before. They went scrounging for them all over the place, and they hired very quickly. That's why they hired all these noncredentialed teachers. This is all just in the last few years. Everybody who studied California's headlong plunge into smaller classes has pointed out that chaos has followed in its wake. It's gotten in the way of almost everything else California has tried to do by way of standards-based reform.

We all want kids across the land to have a great likelihood of having a teacher who is effective.

California is a bad example of a marketplace test of teacher quality. What California set out to do was abruptly increase teacher quantity. And it had all sorts of perverse effects, like sucking experienced teachers out of inner-city schools into suburbs that suddenly had jobs that they had never had before as a result of this sudden need for umpteen thousand more teachers in California all at once. The absence of differential pay, incentive pay and greater personnel authority in urban schools created an environment where suburban schools were able to easily lure away more experienced teachers. Thus, most needy schools were left with only new, inexperienced teachers. So I don't take this as a very good example of the philosophy that we're suggesting.

Some states offer better illustrations. New Jersey, for example, developed a very solid alternate route program to bring people with academic training in their subject areas into classrooms without a long detour through education schools. This has worked well for the Garden State. Texas also has developed a sophisticated alternative certification program. More recently, Pennsylvania has introduced an alternative certification program to attract liberal arts graduates and mid-career professionals into the classroom. The cases of New Jersey and Texas are particularly instructive. It turns out that students of teachers who were alternatively certified do as well as students whose teachers were traditionally certified. For more on this research, see the "alternative certification" page on our new Teacher Quality Clearinghouse Web site, www.TQClearinghouse.org.

I should also add one note of caution about the study Linda keeps referring to, the one in which she claims to have found a positive correlation between National Commission-approved state-level policies, such as requiring teachers to gain a background in pedagogy, and student achievement. (It's available online at www.epaa.asu.edu.) Admittedly, that's a difficult hypothesis to test, and I assume that Linda and the commission did the best job they could in creating their research design. Yet the claim that there is a definite correlation between these policies and student achievement goes far beyond what her study is able to do. For example, while some variables were controlled for, others were not. We simply cannot know whether the commission's favored policies caused the student achievement.

I point this out because it would be sorely misleading for states to read this study and think it conclusively links student achievement with NCTAF policies. A better test of which state policies are effective would use longitudinal, value-added data on student achievement and would look at very discrete policies. Certainly, more research is needed; we all agree about that. We also have suggestions for which topics most need to be explored. The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation hosted a teacher quality research conference this past winter; this yielded a list of some important topics that beg for study. You can find them listed on our Teacher Quality Clearinghouse Web site, at www.TQClearinghouse.org/research.html.

We all want kids across the land to have a great likelihood of having a teacher who is effective. I think the main point of dispute here is whether we have a better chance of getting to that goal by erecting more state regulatory hoops and national accreditation and certification and tests, or whether we are more apt to reach the desired destination by letting the people on the job, on line, make these crucial personnel decisions at the building level.

For more information about the positions of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, you may contact their Web sites:

Fordham Foundation: www.edexcellence.net
NCTAF:www.tc.columbia.edu/~teachcomm/

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON: AN ECS ANALYSIS

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF)
vs.
The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (Fordham)

Font Key: Standard = agreement; *Italic = disagreement*
Sans Serif font = different emphasis

	Fordham	NCTAF
1. What's the problem?	• There are too many poorly qualified teachers teaching. • Too many teachers lack adequate subject-matter knowledge.	• There are too many poorly qualified teachers teaching. • Too many teachers lack adequate subject-matter knowledge *and/or the ability to teach it effectively to diverse learners.*
2. What are the causes of the problem?	a. The traditional system of teacher preparation is inadequate. b. State certification procedures are inadequate. c. Our efforts to recruit good teachers are ineffective. *We need to do more to attract the best and the brightest candidates into teaching.* d. Good teachers are not being retained in the profession. e. Too many teachers are assigned to teach out of their field of competence. f. Districts are responding to teacher shortages by hiring people lacking adequate training.	a. The traditional system of teacher preparation is inadequate. b. State certification procedures are inadequate. c. Our efforts to recruit good teachers are ineffective. *We need more minority teachers and teachers for hard-to-staff schools and subjects.* d. Good teachers are not being retained in the profession. e. Too many teachers are assigned to teach out of their field of competence. f. Districts are responding to teacher shortages by hiring people lacking adequate training *in both subject matter and pedagogy.* g. Professional development is inadequate.

What are the solutions?	**Fordham**	**NCTAF**
a. for inadequate teacher preparation	• Promote stronger subject knowledge, *not teacher education.* • *Increase competition — end monopoly of schools of education.* • *Create alternative, short-course preparation programs that emphasize on-the-job training and mentoring, not education theory.*	• Promote stronger subject knowledge *coupled with subject-matter pedagogy and knowledge of student learning undergraduate teacher education.* • *Create extended teacher education programs with quality year-long internships — similar to medicine.* • *Hold all programs to higher standards for program accreditation tied to professional standards.*
b. for inadequate state certification procedures	• Ensure that teachers have strong subject knowledge through a rigorous examination *or a review of undergraduate course work.* • *Ensure that teachers have a solid general education.* • *Perform background checks to insure teachers are trustworthy.* • *Deregulate most state certification functions and replace them with school-level autonomy and accountability that gives broad responsibility to the school principal.*	• Ensure that teachers have strong subject knowledge through a rigorous examination • *Ensure that teachers have adequate teaching skill as demonstrated through rigorous examinations and supervised internships.* • *Establish independent state professional standards boards to better enforce standards.* • *Use National Board standards as benchmark for accomplished teachers.* • *Insist on strong accreditation requirements for teacher education programs.*
c. for ineffective recruitment efforts	• Offer financial incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools or shortage subjects. • Provide pay increases or other rewards to teachers who are outstanding *as demonstrated by student achievement gains.* • *Promote shorter, more accessible teacher-preparation programs.* • *Eliminate the regulatory bureaucracy that controls entry into teaching.*	• Offer financial incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools or shortage subjects. • Provide pay increases or other rewards to teachers who are outstanding *as demonstrated by certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or other measures of advanced standing.* • *Equalize teachers' salaries across districts to provide greater equity.* • *Increase the quality, completion rate and placement rate of teacher education programs.* • Streamline district hiring and state certification. • Eliminate barriers to teacher mobility. • Redesign schools so that they better support teaching.

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What are the solutions?	**Fordham**	**NCTAF**
d. for retaining good teachers	• Reward teachers who are outstanding. • *Allow schools to structure teacher pay and responsibilities in ways that enhance teacher satisfaction and school performance.* • *Implement increased accountability for school principals and give them increased autonomy to hire, fire and pay teachers based on market considerations and individual performance.*	• Reward teachers who are outstanding. • *Create a career continuum that includes National Board certification.* • *Remove incompetent teachers through a peer review process.* • Develop strong induction programs. • Offer high-quality professional development. • Restructure schools to better support teaching and learning.
e. for out-of-field teaching	• Offer recruitment and salary incentives to teach in high-need subjects and areas. • Insure that teachers have solid subject-matter preparation. • Create high-quality alternative preparation programs for mid-career professionals. • *Ease entry into teaching for mid-career professionals and others with subject matter expertise.* • *Hold schools accountable for results to discourage out-of-field hiring.*	• Offer recruitment and salary incentives to teach in high-need subjects and areas. • Insure that teachers have solid subject-matter preparation. • Create high-quality alternative preparation programs for mid-career professionals. • *Tighten regulations on out-of-field hiring.*
f. for hiring inadequately trained people	• Develop quality pathways into teaching for recent graduates, mid-career changers and classroom paraprofessionals.	• Develop quality pathways into teaching for recent graduates, mid-career changers and classroom paraprofessionals *that stress pedagogical knowledge and subject-specific teaching skills.* • *Improve overall teacher preparation.* • *Allow no one to serve as a classroom teacher who is not fully certified.* • Fix dysfunctional hiring systems.
g. for poor professional development		• Increase state support for high quality professional development. • Embed professional development in teachers' daily work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

The positions of NCTAF and the Fordham Foundation generally are regarded as competing and ideologically incompatible. The side-by-side comparison of the two (see previous table), however, reveals substantial areas of both agreement and disagreement. Agreement on the key problems and their causes, in fact, is quite extensive, and there even appears to be substantial agreement on a number of proposed solutions.

- What are the implications of the agreements and disagreements between the NCTAF and Fordham positions for state policymakers?
- Do the agreements provide a foundation for policymakers to undertake confident action in spite of the disagreements on fundamental points?
- Do the agreements point to specific policies that ought to be put in place?

What specific questions do policymakers need to consider as they seek to improve teaching quality in the social and political context of their states?

The answers to these questions can be found in the following discussion that, in the view of ECS staff, addresses the most significant points of consensus between the Fordham and NCTAF positions. The identified consensus merits serious consideration by policymakers as they develop strategies for improving the quality of teaching in their states. *Please note that only the consensus points themselves reflect a Fordham/NCTAF agreement. The amplification of those points and the suggested considerations for policymakers reflect the thinking of ECS staff.*

Consensus Point #1 — Ensure that teachers have command of the subject matter they are assigned to teach

Even with "teacher-proof" curricula, even with all of the wonderful content to which students and teachers have access through the Internet, effective teachers need to have a good grasp of the subjects they are teaching to their students. Clearly, the amount of actual subject knowledge needed depends upon the students' grade level and the state's subject content requirements for that grade level. Even at the elementary school level, however, the student content requirements — particularly in mathematics and science — have become sufficiently demanding that teachers need a solid preparation in their subject matter.

The strong consensus on this point between the Fordham and NCTAF positions does not extend, however, to a consensus about pedagogical knowledge. For Fordham, pedagogical knowledge is of minor importance, while NCTAF cites research that seems to show that knowledge about student learning and effective teaching in specific subject areas is especially significant in enabling a teacher to engage a broad range of students effectively.

The effort to ensure adequate subject knowledge among teachers requires policymakers to consider a number of specific policies and issues:

1. Do the program and graduation requirements for state-approved or state-sponsored teacher-preparation programs ensure content knowledge adequate to teach to state content standards at the grade levels for which teacher graduates are certified to teach?

2. Do state certification or licensure policies ensure that teachers have adequate subject-matter knowledge to teach at all levels covered by their license?

   Many states, for example, have K-8 licenses that may enable teachers with weak subject-matter training to teach out of their depth. On the other hand, masters degree subject-area requirements for continuing certification may be excessive for many teachers and may ill serve the needs of hard-to-staff schools, which might be better served by having more teachers with good depth in a variety of subject areas.

3. Are policies in place at the state level that discourage out-of-field teaching? Are these policies enforced?

4. Does the state demonstrably support ongoing professional development for teachers so that they can keep up with new knowledge in their subject field?

5. Apart from the state role, are there effective accountability and quality assurance mechanisms in place at the district and building levels that promote solid subject-matter knowledge among teachers?

Consensus Point # 2 — Provide significant recruitment and salary incentives for teachers who are willing to accept challenging teaching assignments

Many schools and districts face difficulties recruiting good teachers for hard-to-staff schools — often in isolated rural and low-income inner-city areas — and for specific subjects, most commonly mathematics, science, bilingual education and special education. Often, students who already lag behind, who often face significant socioeconomic barriers, and who thus need the most effective and dedicated teachers are the least likely to have such teachers, especially in shortage subjects.

While some good teachers teach in hard-to-staff schools through sheer dedication, many others will require significant financial incentives to accept — and remain in — such assignments. Finding teachers to teach in shortage subjects poses a different kind of challenge, especially in the fields of mathematics and science where people with bachelors degrees can make as much money right out of college as the most senior teachers. In general, teacher salaries are low in comparison with professions of comparable responsibility and may need to be raised in order to attract and retain more good people.

Providing incentives is not as simple as it might seem, however. Not all incentives are likely to work equally well. And, without a significant state role, a rush by districts to provide incentives can create a bidding war for the best teachers that will be won by the wealthier districts. Moreover, rewards and incentives are not likely to be sufficient to keep teachers in the schools to which they've been recruited without attention to working conditions and teacher support.

Thus, state policymakers should consider a number of important issues when thinking about developing an incentive policy:

1. Do scholarship and loan-forgiveness programs aimed at getting teachers to teach in hard-to-staff schools or in shortage subject areas target the right students — i.e., those most likely to remain in teaching, especially in hard-to-staff schools?

   Programs that target the most academically talented high school students, for example, can fall short of expectations because these students have many more lucrative options upon college graduation than teaching alone and may not remain in the classroom for a long period of time. On the other hand, programs that target local residents to become "home-grown" teachers often seem to be quite successful.

2. Do such programs have the mechanisms necessary to ensure recipients will honor their commitment to teach in the targeted areas?

   Is their monetary award, for example, sufficiently generous that students not only will be obligated morally but also financially to honor the commitment they made? Are loan-forgiveness programs structured so that recipients must teach for a specified number of years for the loan to be forgiven?

3. Are the salary differentials or the opportunities for merit-based rewards for teaching in shortage subject areas or hard-to-staff schools of sufficient size to attract talented candidates?

4. Do present union agreements permit the kind of salary differentials necessary to make adequate financial incentives possible, or would these agreements have to be modified?

5. In addition to offering financial incentives, are there other measures in place that encourage teachers to teach and remain in hard-to-staff schools?

   Regardless of the financial incentives, few talented teachers will teach for long in schools with inadequate resources, hostile students, poor leadership, inadequate teacher support, lack of instructional focus, or a culture of failure. With isolated rural schools, teachers imported from other areas often have difficulty fitting into the local culture and lack the support network they need to feel comfortable. Unless these problems are addressed, incentives will have only the most limited success in motivating teachers to respond to the greatest areas of need.

Consensus Point #3 — Reward outstanding teachers

Although both NCTAF and Fordham agree that outstanding teachers should be rewarded, their respective ideas concerning how such rewards should be structured are extremely different. NCTAF, for example, strongly supports certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. This certification relies on the wholly voluntary initiative of individual teachers to gain recognition from the board's teacher evaluators that they have met the board's professional standards. Such recognition is based upon review of a portfolio that includes student work and videotapes of the teacher in action and upon a written examination. NCTAF encourages, further, the incentive pay raises many states give to National Board-certified teachers, along with pay raises for teachers who demonstrate superior knowledge and skill in other ways. In addition, NCTAF supports giving outstanding teachers greater opportunities for leadership and mentoring less accomplished teachers.

Fordham, in contrast, would base rewards for outstanding teachers solely on the demonstrated achievement of their students, ideally on value-added student assessments, and as part of a systematic evaluation of all teachers. Like NCTAF, Fordham supports increasing pay for outstanding teachers and also appointing them to more senior and more responsible positions.

Currently, while there are numerous building, district, state and national efforts that recognize teachers for outstanding work, such efforts are limited both in their scope and in the kind of recognition they provide. Rarely are these efforts part of a systematic assessment of the performance of all teachers, and rarely are the rewards they offer comparable in significance to the increases in pay or status teachers receive on the seniority scale. Although the salary increases and the greater prestige accorded by states to National Board-certified teachers are often significant, National Board certification remains an isolated effort. It neither recognizes all deserving teachers nor has the clear tie to increased student achievement that many policymakers desire.

On the one hand, it seems obvious that outstanding teachers deserve to be honored and rewarded, and such rewards need not only be financial but could also include opportunities to serve as mentors, increase professional standing and assume greater responsibility and leadership. On the other hand, the impact of such an effort is uncertain. A 1994-95 National Center for Education Statistics' survey of more than 6,000 teachers, for example, indicates that giving special recognition to outstanding teachers is likely to do little to encourage teachers to remain in teaching.

Moreover, there are important questions concerning the basis and process of recognition for outstanding teachers. Can it be fairly based on student achievement results given the limitations of student assessment and the fact that some teachers start with more accomplished students than others? Can it be as inclusive and systematic as it ought to be without violating provisions of collective bargaining agreements governing teacher pay and promotion? Can it avoid the pitfalls of previous efforts to implement merit pay?

Thus, policymakers developing efforts to reward outstanding teachers need to exercise caution and to consider a number of specific policies and issues:

1. Are the rewards for outstanding teachers to be part of a systematic and inclusive effort to assess the performance of all teachers, or is the process to be a more casual one?

   While a more systematic effort ultimately might be fairer and might serve as a greater incentive for all teachers to strive for excellence, it may invite strong opposition, especially if it challenges current collective bargaining agreements.

2. What is to be the basis for determining outstanding performance?

   As in other professions, teachers are likely to respond most favorably to an assessment by their peers. Peer evaluation, however, may not involve the strong link to student achievement that many policymakers favor. Certainly, if student performance is to be a factor in the determination, it must be assessed fairly and adequately; a single assessment is unlikely to be sufficient. Moreover, teachers who teach low-performing students must not be put at a disadvantage in comparison to teachers who teach more accomplished students. Thus, if student performance is to be part of the basis for the assessment and reward of teachers, the progress a teacher's students make, and not only their end-level of achievement, must be a significant consideration.

3. Will the rewards recognize the overall achievements of an entire school or only on the success of individual teachers?

   Some educators and policymakers are concerned that reward systems that recognize the contributions of individual teachers, rather than schools, will sow the seeds of competition between teachers to the detriment of students.

4. Do the rewards provide significant, rather than token, recognition?

5. If financial rewards, including salary increases, are offered to outstanding teachers, do poorer districts and schools have the funds available to match the rewards offered by their wealthier counterparts so that their good teachers will not be enticed away?

Consensus Point #4. Develop alternative pathways into teaching for nonlicensed college graduates, mid-career changers, classroom paraprofessionals and other nontraditional candidates

There are many good undergraduate teacher education programs that do an effective job of training their 18-22-year-old students to become classroom teachers. Given the growing teacher shortage that already severely affects many states, however, not enough good undergraduate programs exist to meet the demand for teachers. Moreover, undergraduate programs do not serve the needs of many capable nontraditional teacher candidates, who already have undergraduate degrees and who will not consider teaching unless they can pursue a shorter preparation program that takes account of what they already know and offers sufficient financial support.

There is a great deal of controversy, however, concerning such alternative preparation programs. The controversy tends to focus on the question of how much preparation is sufficient and on the practice, in some alternative programs, of assigning teachers in training responsibility for their own classroom before they are fully licensed or certified. Given the urgent shortage of teachers in some states and districts and the need to open up quality pathways into teaching for a wide range of potential recruits, it seems unrealistic to demand that everyone who enters the classroom pursue the same kind of training program and have full teaching credentials. At the same time, it is clear that anyone assigned to a class should have as much relevant prior training as possible and should satisfy some basic set of criteria. Moreover, all beginning teachers — and especially those with limited prior training — should receive good supervision.

In developing initiatives that address alternative pathways into teaching, state policymakers should consider the following policies and issues:

1. What is the actual need and demand for alternative preparation programs?

   The information required to answer this question is substantial. It includes good teacher supply-and-demand data on a national, state-by-state and district-by-district basis; information about the extent to which a state is able to take advantage of surpluses in other states; and information about the adequacy and capacity of current state teacher preparation programs to meet the needs for teachers in specific geographic and subject areas and for teachers who can teach effectively to specific populations of students. It also includes a good assessment of the needs of minority and nontraditional teacher candidates, who may be inadequately served by existing programs.

2. How can alternative programs most effectively increase access into the teaching profession?

   To tap certain pools of candidates successfully, alternative programs may need to be set up in nontraditional locations and involve new organizational partners. Community colleges, for example, tend to have high percentages of nontraditional college students, including minorities, and may offer a good avenue for these students to enter teaching.

3. How can the quality of alternative preparation programs be guaranteed?

   Just as in traditional programs, the quality of the program faculty, the soundness and relevance of the curriculum, and the opportunity for extensive and well-supervised field experience are critical factors. Since, in many alternative programs, field experience is the on-the-job experience candidates receive in being assigned their own classroom during the preparation period, several additional considerations are critical in ensuring that the alternative program is successful:

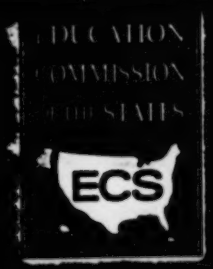
- *Do alternative candidates have at least a basic preparation in classroom management, student assessment and classroom teaching skills before they enter the classroom?*
- *Are alternative candidates given careful, effective and continual supervision by a trained and accomplished mentor teacher?*
- *Are alternative candidates given collateral coursework that complements their classroom teaching assignment, such as knowledge about the effective teaching of reading, in order to deepen their teaching skill through relevant theoretical and professional knowledge?*

4. Do current collective bargaining agreements allow compensation for teachers in training who function as teachers of record through their alternative program?

5. In addition to considering high-quality alternative routes into teaching, is the state involved in the development of good strategies for retaining teachers already in the classroom?

Far too many teachers leave the profession after only a few years. In this regard, policymakers would be wise to explore beginning teacher induction and support programs, solid professional development and long-term career-growth options for teachers, as well as salary incentives such as the rewards for outstanding teachers discussed previously.

For more information on teacher quality, see the ECS Web site (www.ecs.org) or contact 303-299-3600.



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